

DIRECTOR, FBI

12/28/77

LEGAT, BUENOS AIRES (66-50)

SECURITY OF BUENOS AIRES OFFICE PERSONNEL

The following is a general summary of the current security situation in Argentina and security measures being taken by personnel of the Buenos Aires Office. (U)

I. GENERAL SITUATION

Since the 3/26/76 intervention by the Argentine military in the floundering Peronist Government, Argentine security forces, spearheaded by the military, have made steady and impressive gains against the terrorist target. During the 3½ years, which preceded the 3/26/76 military intervention, Argentine terrorists were allowed to develop to the point that the Government was virtually impotent to act against them. During this 3½-year period, terrorists carried out at will arson, assassinations, bombings, kidnappings, aircraft hijacking, and massive armed attacks against Argentine police and military units. These occurrences virtually became a common, everyday occurrence. Also, during this 3½-year period, the U. S. Consular Agent in Cordoba was kidnapped by terrorists and subsequently executed. Additionally, during this period, an officer of the U. S. Information Service was kidnapped and seriously wounded by terrorists in Cordoba. Also, during this period, [any number of captured terrorist documents clearly indicated that specific personnel at the U. S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, were targeted for terrorist acts, such as assassination or kidnapping.] (S) At one particularly (U) critical period of accelerated terrorist activities, a large portion of non-essential U. S. Embassy Buenos Aires personnel was evacuated to neighboring Uruguay, in order to reduce terrorist targets. The Bureau was kept currently advised of these terrorist activities. (e) (u)

At the present time, the Peoples Revolutionary Party (ERP) has been virtually annihilated, while the Montonero organization has been reduced drastically making effective

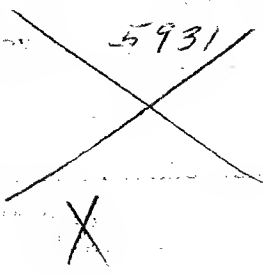
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activities by these groups against the U. S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, personnel extremely difficult. (U)

II. PAST AND PRESENT SECURITY PRECAUTIONS TAKEN BY
BUENOS AIRES OFFICE PERSONNEL

On personal orders of the Ambassador and the recommendation of the Security Watch Committee of the U. S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, Legat had guards assigned to his residence on a daily basis from 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 A.M. Since 9/30/77, guards at Legat's residence have been discontinued. In order to avoid setting patterns which would facilitate terrorist surveillance, Legat personnel have and continue to vary their hours up to two hours each day with regard to arrival and departure times. Also, Legat personnel vary their routes to and from work and the method of transportation, rotating the Bureau car, personally owned automobiles and public transportation in a further effort to thwart attempts at surveillance by terrorists. (U)

In the residential area, where Legat and Assistant Legat reside, roving Embassy patrol cars constantly observe residences of U. S. Embassy personnel in this area to identify possible terrorist surveillance. There is also a roving patrol in the Federal Capital where the two Clerk-Stenographers of the Buenos Aires office reside. (U)

Severe travel restrictions have been imposed on Embassy personnel, requiring clearances from the Security Officer, prior to traveling outside of the Federal Capital and secure residential area and suburbs. Certain areas of Argentina are out of bounds for travel by U. S. Embassy personnel because of the greater terrorist threat in these areas. (U)

Bureau car is equipped with a Motorola radio, which is connected to the Embassy Control Center, which is manned 24 hours a day. In addition, residences of all Legat personnel are reequipped with Motorola radios that are connected with the Embassy Control Center. The Bureau car is also partially armored. (U)

Both the Legal Attache and Assistant Legal Attache are armed when traveling to and from work and at other times as deemed appropriate. Permission has been given to the Legal Attache and the Assistant Legal Attache by the Argentine Ministry of Defense to carry weapons. (U)

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Legat is closely following the security situation in Argentina through police and military contacts. Should any situation develop indicating that Legat personnel might be in danger, the Bureau will be immediately advised and prompt on-the-spot action will be taken by the Legal Attache. (U)